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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
✓ AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AGENCY  
Washington, D. C.

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: FOOD STORAGE AND SHIPPING :  
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"The only way to be sure to have enough of anything is sometimes to have too much. The problem is to handle these occasional abundances so that waste is avoided, and also so that the farmer has a market that will encourage him to continue to produce."

--Marvin Jones.

The War Food Administration has fought a running battle against space shortages for the last two years. Lack of cold storage space has been a major problem ever since the bountiful crop of 1942. The search for additional storage space for food has been far-reaching. As new space has been made available in such places as converted warehouses and garages and abandoned mines, it has been filled immediately.

The shipping situation, difficult since the first of the year, became acute in the weeks just before D-Day. Retention of a large part of the Allied merchant fleet in British ports to rush supplies and forces across the Channel for the invasion has been a chief reason for glutted storage facilities.

Farm Production

Plainly, the war production record of U. S. farmers has raised a number of problems. During the first four months of this year, for example, they sent to market half again as much farm produce as in the same months in the years before the war.

We had more food in cold storage on July 1 than ever before. Stocks of all items, with the exception of creamery butter, exceeded those of a year earlier and the 5-year (1939-43) average. In amounts above the 5-year average on July 1, we had:

193 thousand tons more meat, 53 percent above 1939-43  
227 million dozen more eggs, 57 percent above 1939-43  
94 thousand tons more lard, 81 percent above 1939-43  
27 thousand tons more frozen vegetables, 90 percent  
above 1939-43.

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On July 1, cooler occupancy for all plants was 85 percent of capacity, and freezers, 87 percent of capacity -- both figures indicating crowded conditions. During the rest of the year, both cooler and freezer space may be taxed to capacity -- although at different seasons. (Cooler space is generally defined as having temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and freezer space anything below 30 degrees.)

Although the storage situation is far from being out of hand, there have been temporary backups. Meat has accumulated at the packing houses. Hogs, especially, could not be moved through slaughter channels as fast as they have been marketed. Some perishable foods such as eggs have had to wait in railroad cars and at assembly points. A considerable volume of products, including eggs and meats, has had to be moved into immediate consumption or other use which would have been stored if facilities had been available.

### Backups Mean Plenty of Food

Home front distribution cannot be expected to run flawlessly in time of war. If storage backups because of temporary surpluses did not occur, we would not be providing adequate protection against war's uncertainties.

Because war is wasteful and unpredictable, we must have a margin of safety in the form of food reserves. Sometimes it is necessary to provide more than would be necessary if production and distribution were sure of going along without a hitch. Nobody can foresee when transportation movements will be interrupted, or supplies sunk or destroyed. In spite of unexpected developments, our armed forces must not run out of food.

The Government buys between 6 and 8 million dollars worth of food daily and exports more than a quarter of a million tons of food per month. This requires a sizeable inventory in reserve, and it may mean occasional periods when we appear to have a surplus.

For example, not so long ago we couldn't find storage for all the eggs. Since the first of the year, the Government has moved 10,000 cars of eggs. Farmers had been asked for only a 2-percent increase in egg production, but hens went 8 percent over the goal.

Despite this unexpected surplus, the contents of only about 225 cars out of the 10,000 -- nine tenths of 1 percent of total egg production last year -- had to be diverted into livestock feed in order to avoid waste. The 192 million dozen "extra" eggs which we had on June 1 was only enough to last the civilian population 18 days. Actually the number of eggs wasn't so great a difficulty after all. The egg situation has cleared up since June 1.



### Handling Supplies

The Government has had to adapt its program to many emergencies, and has had to do it in a hurry. Late in 1943, meat and eggs, and fruits and vegetables crowded freezer space. So frozen meat for export went directly from packer to shipside in order to conserve warehouse space. Cured meat and lard were forced from freezer to cooler space. Ration point values were reduced in an effort to increase consumption. Egg drying contracts were changed to speed frozen eggs out of storage. Our Allies were encouraged to take certain commodities sooner than they had planned. Fruit preservers cooperated by processing frozen fruits ahead of other holdings.

There was a shortage of potatoes in the spring of 1943. But, based on normal consumption, that shortage amounted to only about 3 percent. If that 3 percent had been on the other side of the scale, we would have had a surplus.

The margin between shortage and surplus is very narrow. Last year, potato yields were 10 bushels per acre above average, giving us an estimated 33 million bushels more than was needed for human consumption. Some of the 33 million bushels were dehydrated and converted into industrial alcohol. Some were diverted into starch. About one-third of one percent went into feed for livestock. Actually though, most of the potatoes were eaten as food.

To play safe we must always be sure there is enough. Should surpluses turn up in spite of our best estimates, we can be resourceful -- getting some value out of lower-grade uses of the commodities.

Disruption of shipping made it possible recently to release to the New York City and nearby civilian trade areas, between 4 and 5 million pounds of beef from Government stocks. The Government is moving all excess food products back into civilian consumption as promptly as possible without congesting markets.

WFA aims to make its buying and storage programs helpful in stabilizing the market. If civilian supplies are short, it aims to keep its inventories as low as is consistent with the uncertainties of a wartime food program. Where some can be safely spared from its stocks and more is needed by civilians, part of the supply is sold back into civilian channels.

### Limestone Mine Has Great Possibilities

An unprecedented project, however, may change the whole complexion of the storage situation. WFA has made arrangements to lease a 75-year-old limestone mine near Atchison, Kansas. The mine has an estimated 12 million cubic feet of space -- equivalent to about 10 percent of all public cooler space in this country. It can be used as a storage vault



for Government-owned lard, eggs, and other perishables. Equipped with portable refrigeration machinery giving a temperature between 30 and 32 degrees, it could become the largest single cold storage house in the United States. Officials were hopeful of placing part of the mine in operation by August 15.

Estimates are that between 3,000 and 3,500 carloads of food, with tonnage of about 75,000, can be stored in the mine with ease. This could be increased to 100,000 tons, depending on the kind of commodities stored.

Lard could be stored upon completion of the project, and as the vast interior became chilled, fatbacks, salt and cured meats, dried fruits and dried eggs could be put away for future use.

Opening of this mine for storage of food means additional assurance that the Government support price on hogs would be met, particularly in time of peak marketing.

#### Other New Storage Space Planned

Private capital and the Defense Plant Corporation will construct about 8 million cubic feet of new storage space to be made available this year. In addition, private capital will finance approximately 5 million cubic feet of space to be added to fish-freezing units, packing and food processing concerns, and in the form of small additions to public storage facilities in various parts of the country.

These additions to the country's storage space do not include facilities constructed out of Lend-Lease funds. These funds were made available to WFA for acquiring storage space in ports where critical situations prevail. Last year approximately \$2,000,000 was allocated to the Army for construction of cold storage warehouses in three West Coast localities to provide space for food destined for Russia and our armed forces in the Pacific.

#### WFA Nonrecoverable Losses Small

Since March 1941, WFA has handled about 5 billion dollars' worth of farm and food products. Nonrecoverable losses amount to only about one-fiftieth of one percent of the goods it has brought -- about \$1 out of \$5,000.

Supplying enough food to civilians, servicemen and our Allies -- that is the real test of our wartime food program. The Nation has been reaching that objective.